

such a way we could have a vote on them on Thursday or Friday. But we do not have that yet.

Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Mr. Leader, if I could just say before you withdraw the consent request, we would be willing, tonight, to have you move to proceed to this measure.

As I said, we would be agreeable to move to proceed to this bill by a voice vote and start the debate tonight. We are not in any way trying to delay the consideration of this very important bill.

Mr. LOTT. I think the Senator knows there is a great difference between moving to proceed and asking unanimous consent. For now, obviously, we cannot get the unanimous consent agreement, so we will not be able to proceed.

In light of the discussions we have just had, and since we cannot get an agreement on taking up Agriculture now, the next votes will occur at 12:30 p.m. tomorrow regarding HUD-VA and related issues, and additional votes will occur late tomorrow afternoon regarding the DOD authorization conference report if we can get this time agreement worked out, and I assume we will be able to. With that, I yield the floor.

TRANSPORTATION RECALL ENHANCEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DOCUMENTATION ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, in just a few minutes I will propound a unanimous consent request concerning the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation Act. First, I ask unanimous consent that a letter I just received from the Secretary of Transportation be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION,
Washington, DC, October 11, 2000.

Hon. JOHN MCCAIN,
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation, U.S. Senate, Wash-
ington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: As you know, the House acted early today to pass H.R. 5164, the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD) Act. This is another important step toward resolving issues raised by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) ongoing Firestone tire investigation.

We strongly support enactment of H.R. 5164. The bill provides increased penalties for safety defects and noncompliances in motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment; lengthens the period for free remedy of defects and noncompliances; enhances the ability of NHTSA to obtain information from foreign as well as domestic sources; and authorizes increased appropriations to enable NHTSA to carry out its additional respon-

sibilities. These provisions were sought by the Administration in its proposed legislation. H.R. 5164 also directs NHTSA to review and report on its procedures for opening defect investigations, a review which the agency has already begun, and directs NHTSA to conduct rulemaking to amend the safety standards on tires, an action which is consistent with the agency's rulemaking plans.

The early warning section in H.R. 5164 enables NHTSA to obtain information about potential defects earlier than under current law. The agency will use the information in deciding whether to open an investigation and will be able to release information in the context of its investigation, as it does today. Information that is not made a part of an investigation could be released if NHTSA determines it would assist in carrying out the agency's investigative responsibilities. The bill contains a new section 30170 that augments the penalties under section 1001 of title 18, United States Code, if a person intentionally misleads the Secretary concerning a safety defect that results in death or serious injury. A "Safe Harbor" provision would excuse the person from the augmented penalties, but would not excuse the person from other penalties under section 1001. The Department of Justice will communicate separately its views on the criminal provisions.

The focus now turns to the Senate, where you have been working diligently on passage of similar legislation, S. 3059, the Motor Vehicle and Motor Vehicle Equipment Defect Notification Improvement Act. Both of the bills contain several key provisions proposed by the Clinton-Gore Administration. We are committed to ensuring that NHTSA has the authority to seek and receive information on potential defects; receives sufficient funding to carry out its expanded responsibilities; and has the authority to impose stiffer penalties to ensure compliance with U.S. motor vehicle safety laws.

Also, Senate confirmation of the President's nominee for Administrator of NHTSA would help implementation of this legislation immeasurably.

In the final days of the 106th Congress, we must not lose the opportunity to save lives and prevent injuries. I urge the full Senate to pass H.R. 5164 before the end of this session. It is critically needed legislation.

Sincerely,

RODNEY E. SLATER.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I will quote parts of the letter from Secretary Slater:

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: As you know, the House acted early today to pass H.R. 5164, the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation Act. This is another important step toward resolving issues raised by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's ongoing Firestone tire investigation.

We strongly support enactment of H.R. 5164. The bill provides increased penalties for safety defects and noncompliances in motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment; lengthens the period for free remedy of defects and noncompliances; enhances the ability of NHTSA to obtain information from foreign as well as domestic sources; and authorizes increased appropriations to enable NHTSA to carry out its additional responsibilities. These provisions were sought by the Administration in its proposed legislation. H.R. 5164 also directs NHTSA to review and report on its procedures for opening defect investigations, a review which the agency has already begun, and directs NHTSA to

conduct rulemaking to amend the safety standards on tires, an action which is consistent with the agency's rulemaking plans.

I will not read the whole letter, except the last paragraph:

In the final days of the 106th Congress, we must not lose the opportunity to save lives and prevent injuries. I urge the full Senate to pass H.R. 5164 before the end of this session. It is critically needed legislation.

Save lives and prevent injuries.

I ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD a letter that was sent from Ms. Claybrook, president of Public Citizen, and others to the House of Representatives on October 9.

That letter says:

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: We are writing to urge the passage of H.R. 5164, despite its serious deficiencies.

It ends up in the last part of the letter:

We urge you to vote to send this bill forward, to encourage the House managers to work with the Senate managers to improve the legislation, and to make sure the authority of NHTSA to protect the public safety is not degraded.

Even though there may be objections from Ms. Claybrook and some of her colleagues, the fact is she wrote to the House urging a vote for this legislation at this time. I think it should be an important part of the RECORD.

Finally, I do not view this as a panacea. The Presiding Officer has significant concerns. We had entered into a colloquy concerning his concerns. Those concerns are legitimate. I assure the Senator from Ohio that the Senator from South Carolina and I will continue to work on this issue next year. I will tell the Senator from Ohio why: Because there is going to be more people dying before this issue is resolved. Just this last weekend in Louisiana, a young boy, who was in a roll-over accident from a tire that shredded, went into a coma.

I am pleased and gratified that the Senator from South Carolina, who has some differing views, as I do, on this bill, wants to see it perfected, as does the Senator from Ohio. But I also agree with the Secretary of Transportation who says that this is an enormously important step forward to take.

I take this opportunity to thank Senator HOLLINGS for his efforts and the way we worked in a bipartisan fashion to report a bill by a vote of 20-0 out of the Commerce Committee.

I will propound two unanimous consent requests, if the first one is objected to. If the first one is objected to, then I will try another unanimous consent request.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Will the distinguished Senator yield?

Mr. MCCAIN. I will be glad to yield to the Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, the distinguished chairman of the committee has led the way on this tire safety measure on the Senate side. I

just had an opportunity to look at the House provision. There is no question that there are two or three things in there that should be cleared up. One, it has certain reporting requirements, but then the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is supposed to keep them top secret. I want that explained to me. We do not operate like the CIA. There is no reason to keep it from public knowledge. In fact, that is exactly why we have this entity—to collect reported defects that come to the attention of the consumers in America.

Secondly, there is another provision with respect to criminal penalties. I have tire manufacturers in my State, and I wanted to be absolutely clear that we did not unduly threaten fine, good businessmen who are working to produce a safe product. Or make it so that they would be faced with some kind of criminal charge by way of a mistake that did not come to their knowledge. That was not the intent of the Senator from Arizona and the Senator from South Carolina as we worked through this.

Obviously, that was taken out of the Senate bill. Otherwise we would never have had a unanimous vote in reporting this bill 20-0. But there is a provision in that House bill whereby if there has been a willful and malicious reporting to this agency—such as we saw in the tobacco case where they all raised their hands and you knew they were lying at the time—then there should be a criminal penalty. That ought to be cleared up in the House bill.

We are only asking that the Senate bill be considered so we can amend the House bill and work this measure out under the leadership of Senator MCCAIN.

The other provision with respect to the reporting of claims—after all that is the only way we found out about these recent deaths that now approximate 100 killed on the highways. As they brought these claims down to a conclusion, the judge put them under what we call a gag order where they were not allowed to consider or consult or even talk about the final settlement. It was more or less kept top secret from the press and media, and nobody knew it was going on.

Of course, NHTSA has been practically dormant. They have not operated the tire safety requirements since the year 1973, and this reflects on us in the committee. They have not had or ordered a single recall on tires in the last 5 years.

There have been 99 million overall safety vehicle recalls, but they have all been voluntary on account of the threats of lawsuits. We know that. It was only because of the word getting out about these lawsuits that we finally have gotten to pay attention to this, bringing out a bill, unanimously

reported under the leadership of the distinguished chairman of the Commerce Committee, which is totally bipartisan.

I join in the Senator's request, which I am confident he will make, that we be able to bring the Senate bill up, amend the House bill, work this out in the next few days—it could be worked out by tomorrow—and have a good measure that would save lives in America.

I yield the floor.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from South Carolina. I understand his concerns.

Let me quote from a letter from the Secretary of Transportation:

The early warning section of H.R. 5164, enables NHTSA to obtain information about potential defects earlier than under current law. The agency will use the information in deciding whether to open an investigation and will be able to release information in the context of its investigation, as it does today. Information that is not made a part of an investigation could be released if NHTSA determines it would assist in carrying out the agency's investigative responsibilities. The bill contains a new section 30170 that augments the penalties under section 1001 of title 18, United States Code, if a person intentionally misleads the Secretary concerning a safety defect that results in death or serious injury. A "Safe Harbor" provision would excuse the person from the augmented penalties, but would not excuse the person from other penalties under section 1001. The Department of Justice will communicate separately its views on the criminal provisions.

I point out again, this is not a perfect bill. I want exactly what came out of the Senate. The House passed, unanimously, by a voice vote, H.R. 5164.

The Secretary of Transportation says: "We strongly support enactment." He finishes up by saying—and I hope my colleagues understand this—

In the final days of the 106th Congress, we must not lose the opportunity to save lives and prevent injuries.

This is not a perfect piece of legislation but an awesome responsibility, at least in the view of the Secretary of Transportation. An opportunity to save lives and prevent injuries is occurring here. I do not think we can let that pass by.

If there is objection, I will, again, ask that the Senator who objects appear on the floor to object. We are not talking about a policy decision here; we are talking about the fact that over 100 lives have been taken on America's highways over a defect that, in the view of every expert, we are making significant progress in addressing.

So, Mr. President, I will begin with my first unanimous consent request, and I will follow it with a second unanimous consent request if it is objected to.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives H.R. 5164 from the House, it be held at the desk. I ask further that it be in order for the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader, to proceed to consideration of the bill, and that only relevant amendments be in order to the bill, and that the bill then, as amended, if amended, be advanced to third reading and passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, I say to my friend from Arizona, I do not have a copy of the request, but it is my understanding, from hearing what the Senator read, it is a bill to come before the Senate with relevant amendments.

Mr. MCCAIN. Yes, that is correct.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. NICKLES. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order for the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader, to proceed to consideration of H.R. 5164 and that it be immediately advanced to third reading and passed, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, would the Senator read that unanimous consent request again, please?

Mr. MCCAIN. I ask unanimous consent that it be in order for the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader, to proceed to consideration of H.R. 5164 and that it be immediately advanced to third reading and passed, with no intervening action or debate.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, I say to my friend from Arizona, this has been signed off on by the ranking member of the committee and signed off on by the leadership over here. But we still have two Senators who want to offer relevant amendments. We will work on that and see what we can do. But at this stage, because of that, I am going to have to object unless the agreement allows for relevant amendments. We would agree to time limits. We would agree to a very short time limit on the relevant amendments, but we do have two Senators who wish to offer relevant amendments.

Mr. MCCAIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, as I said on Friday, this is not an ordinary piece of legislation. It is a piece of legislation that, in the view of the Secretary of Transportation, has to do with saving lives and preventing injuries. Over 100 Americans have died on the highways of America already.

After the completion of Senator ROBERTS' remarks, I will insist that the two Senators come down and object in person. This is too serious a business, I tell the Senator from Nevada, for them to assume a cloak of anonymity. If they want amendments, then I will be more than happy to hear their objections and see what their amendments are. But this is not acceptable. It is not acceptable, when lives are at stake, for Senators—at least the Senator from Oklahoma objects and comes down and takes the responsibility for the objection. It is not acceptable for Members on the other side of the aisle to hide behind the Senator from Nevada in their objections.

Mr. NICKLES. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. MCCAIN. I am glad to yield to the Senator from Oklahoma for a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. NICKLES. I am asking the Senator from Arizona a question.

The unanimous consent request that you are now making is to take up and pass the bill that passed last night, without objection. It passed by a voice vote late last night, unanimously, through the House of Representatives, and is the bill that the Secretary of Transportation, Mr. Slater, urged that the Senate and the Congress pass?

Mr. MCCAIN. I might add, it has to do with saving lives and preventing injuries.

Mr. NICKLES. I compliment my friend from Arizona because, one, you are showing flexibility. I compliment you because you have stated what your preference is. You have your preference in the bill that passed out of the Commerce Committee, of which you are the Chair and Senator HOLLINGS is the ranking member. But you are also saying, if I cannot get that, realizing that we are on overtime right now and we are running out of days, you are willing to say, let's take the House-passed bill. The House-passed bill passed unanimously. That does not happen all that often around here for legislation that is this significant.

The Senator from Arizona is saying he is willing to take it and pass it. It is the same bill that the administration says they want. And it will become law if we can get this consent agreed to.

So I compliment my colleague from Arizona. I hope our colleagues would possibly even reconsider and let us pass this bill tonight or tomorrow.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, under my reservation, I remind the Senator from Arizona and the Senator from Oklahoma that on Friday of last week we agreed on this side to have the Senate bill brought before the Senate at that time, pursuant to the unanimous consent request of the Senator from Arizona, to have relevant amendments. We have no objection to that coming be-

fore the Senate and working on it that way.

This matter which has just passed the House, we just got it a matter of minutes ago—not hours ago; minutes ago—and we have two Senators who want to look at this legislation. They have some idea that they want to offer relevant amendments. We know that, come the light of day, they may not want to offer those relevant amendments, but now they do.

So I say to my friend from Arizona that he can come back after Senator ROBERTS speaks, but the same objection will be there unless we hear in the interim that the Senators, for some unknown reason, withdraw their objections.

On that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MCCAIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona retains the floor.

Mr. MCCAIN. Let me just say that I will be here on the floor. If the two Senators who object from the other side of the aisle would like to come down, I would be glad to discuss their concerns. I would be glad to commit to holding hearings, along with Senator HOLLINGS, next year to try to perfect this bill.

I know my friend from South Carolina has serious concerns about the safe harbor aspect of this bill. I intend to work with him to tighten it up. I much would have preferred the bill pass through the Senate, let me tell you.

We inaugurated a little phrase called "straight talk" back when I was seeking another office. I will tell you, in straight talk, what this is all about. This is the trial lawyers against the automotive interests. Trial lawyers do not want it because they do not like the provisions. They want to be able to sue anybody for anything under any circumstances. And the automotive industry wants this thing killed, figuring that the publicity surrounding these accidents and these tragedies that are taking place will die out and they will be able to kill off this legislation next year.

Straight talk, Mr. President, that is really what it is all about. It is another compelling argument for campaign finance reform because neither the trial lawyers who want to make this bill untenable for the manufacturers, nor the manufacturers who want to water down this bill so dramatically that it will have no effect, should be the ones who are driving this problem.

This legislation is all about saving lives and preventing injuries. So what we are seeing here is that special interests are winning again. I think it is wrong. I don't know how you go back to the American people and say we didn't enact legislation—we could not get together after a unanimous vote in

the House—to resolve some concerns over an issue that "would save lives and prevent injuries."

Mr. REID. If the Senator will yield, I say to my friend, he and I came to Washington at the same time 18 years ago. I know he has more patience than I, but we have to have a little bit of patience. In this instance, I don't think it is going to require a great deal of patience. We are going to be in session tomorrow, and I think there is a very good possibility, as I see it, that the persuasive arguments Senators have made today and last week will prevail and this legislation will pass.

As things now stand, we have people who haven't been able to read the bill. They may have some problems with it. The ranking member, the Senator from South Carolina, and some of our people over here—and, of course, the Senator from South Carolina works well with the Senator from Arizona, and we will see what we can do to get this wrapped up.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, in closing, I appreciate the efforts on the part of the Senator from Nevada. As he said, he and I came to Congress together many years ago, and we are good friends. I want to also, again, pay great praise to Senator HOLLINGS, who has really had to go a long way in compromising in order to see that this legislation is passed. I will be seeking unanimous consent tomorrow morning. I am not exactly sure when, but it will be sometime in the morning when it fits in with the parliamentary procedures. I hope the unanimous consent request can be agreed to. I thank my friend from South Carolina and the Senator from Nevada. I know we will be working assiduously to try to get these objections solved.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I don't want the Senator to take back his praise, but let me clear the record relative to trial lawyers. Trial lawyers got us where we are. If it hadn't been for trial lawyers bringing the cases and filing some of the reports made on the recoveries thereof, we would not have awakened, literally, and awakened our own Commerce Committee to have the hearings to put us on the floor this evening.

I am intimate with the trial lawyer movement in this country. I can tell you that they have become a whipping boy for Tom Donahue and his blooming Chamber of Commerce, and any time you want to pass some measure like the Y2K bill, the trial lawyers had no objection whatsoever.

I have to correct the record because the chairman said that is the contest that is going on, about the right to sue and everything else. They have the right. The right is there and neither the Senate bill nor the House bill denies that right. We strengthen it with

the reporting and then make the reports public so they can be attained, and they can avoid going to court on cases and avoid trial lawyers. So this particular bill is agreed to by this particular trial lawyer—either the Senate or the House version this evening, right now. I would vote for either one of them. But I think we can get a much better bill with the Senate bill. I wanted to correct the comments made about the trial lawyers because they have been there bringing peace and justice and safety to America's consumers. They got us this far, and I am proud to commend the trial lawyers for doing their work and saving lives.

I yield the floor.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I have one comment in response to my friend. I knew any comment about trial lawyers would not go unnoticed by him. As always, I am very appreciative of his comments.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I want to join the Democratic whip in propounding the identical unanimous consent request with regard to the bringing up of the DOD conference report as stated to the Senate by the distinguished majority leader just moments ago.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have no objection. The staffs of Senator LEVIN and Senator WARNER have worked out the problem.

Just a minute, Mr. President.

Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, we are not going to be able to do the agreement. There is a procedural problem with the Agriculture authorization, which goes first. We will work on that later.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I handed the Senator a colloquy which Senator LEVIN signed. The Senator raising the objection signed the colloquy.

Mr. REID. Why don't we have the Senator from Kansas speak, and we will see if anything can be done.

Mr. WARNER. I withdraw the request.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now be in a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURNS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO BRUCE VENTO

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, today I come to the floor to offer a tribute to a humble man.

Yesterday, while I was in Minnesota, I received word that one of my former colleagues from the House of Rep-

resentatives, Congressman Bruce Vento, had passed away after a battle with cancer.

My tribute cannot adequately communicate his successful career, because to Bruce, words always paled in comparison to acts.

Bruce was a tireless advocate for the residents of St. Paul, first in the State Legislature and, for the past 24 years, in the U.S. Congress.

He was a man of his word and a man of principle.

He was a man committed to doing the right thing for the right reason, no matter how long it took.

Take for example his work on behalf of Hmong veterans—a large number of whom reside in his Congressional district.

He worked on it for over a decade: educating his colleagues about the need to help their constituents and offering the compromises needed to get the job done.

I was pleased that after his tireless work Congress after Congress, year after year, Bruce's effort paid off.

Earlier this year, Congress passed and the President signed into law his legislation to facilitate citizenship to Hmong veterans who served with us in the Vietnam War.

Bruce was an effective Congressman for the St. Paul area.

We worked together on a number of fronts to support Minnesota and the people of St. Paul such as improving senior and low-income housing in St. Paul, supporting St. Paul's effort in becoming a Brownfields Showcase Community, and pursuing projects to improve the St. Paul Community.

Bruce is best known for his efforts to protect the environment and to improve our national parks and wilderness areas.

All Minnesotans will benefit from his work to ensure the outdoor activities we all enjoy will be there for our children and grandchildren.

That is his legacy, and we are all proud and grateful for his achievements.

Minnesotans were represented well by Bruce Vento, and he will be missed.

To his family and friends, I extend my deepest sympathy.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we all in the Senate and the House have been saddened by the death of Bruce Vento. Congressman Vento came to the Congress 2 years after I did. We served together and worked together on many issues. He belonged, proudly, to a sort of informal Italian-American caucus. We would talk about from which parts of Italy our families had come, and we became close friends.

I remember talking with Bruce when he was first diagnosed with cancer. I told him he was in my prayers, my wife's prayers, our family's prayers. He was a good man.

I was sad when I heard him announce he would not run for reelection because

of his illness. Of course, we have been notified of his death.

There are Senators and House Members who come here who, under the old saying, some are show horses and some are workhorses. He was a workhorse. One of his priorities during his last year in Congress was the plight of the Hmong people, many of whom settled in Minnesota. They are people from Laos who had fought with the United States and its allies in the Vietnam war and came to the United States afterwards. They very much wanted to become citizens here but had great difficulty learning English because they come from a culture that does not have a written language.

Bruce Vento was the primary House sponsor of the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act, a bill that passed the House and Senate earlier this year and became law. This bill waives the English language requirement for naturalization, and provides special consideration for the civics requirement for Hmong veterans and their spouses and widows. It has been a small concession on our part in return for the great sacrifices these men made in fighting for the American cause in Southeast Asia. I am pleased that with the help of Senators WELLSTONE, FEINGOLD, HAGEL, MCCAIN, and others the bill became law before the Congressman's untimely death earlier this week.

There is another bill that addresses an outstanding issue in the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act. H.R. 5234, cosponsored by Congressman Vento, will extend the benefits of the new law to widows of Hmong veterans who died in Laos, Thailand, or Vietnam. The bill was passed by voice vote in the House on September 25. The Senate companion bill is strongly bipartisan with seven Democrats and five Republicans joining Senator WELLSTONE as sponsors. I urge my friends on the other side of the aisle to lift the hold they have on this bill and allow it to pass so we can complete our work on this important issue. We can do this in Bruce Vento's memory, but we can also rectify an injustice that has been done to the Hmong people who have come to this country.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, it is with great sadness that I join my colleague from Minnesota, Senator WELLSTONE, in paying tribute to the life of our colleague, Congressman Bruce Vento. I learned of the Congressman's passing upon my return to Washington. I send my condolences to his wife Sue and his family, along with all of the people from the great state of Minnesota who mourn and who thank him for his many years of service in the House of Representatives. He is deserving of special praise in recognition of his tremendous efforts to use his status as a federal legislator to bring a voice to the voiceless and to defend